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ALASKA SCENIC BYWAYS RECEIVE FEDERAL GRANTS

Volunteer Byway Groups Ready to Put Federal Money to Work

Volunteer supporters of Alaska's most scenic and special roads have received six grants totaling nearly \$375 thousand, according to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) scenic byway grants, which were announced Monday, are intended to help recognize, preserve, and enhance selected scenic roads and highways throughout the United States.

Joe Lawton, former volunteer leader for the Glenn Highway, National Scenic Byway partnership board, said their two grants will help to tell the byway's story. "This designation touched a nerve with locals, who were already very proud of their byway, he said. "We worked all winter on interpretation and marketing plans for the Glenn Highway, and this money will help our vision to become real this summer."

Included in the package are three \$25 thousand seed grants, one for each of Alaska's three nationally designated byways, two grants for interpretation of byway resources on the Glenn and Alaska Marine highways, and a planning grant intended to prepare the Sterling Highway for nomination as a National Scenic Byway. This list is as follows:

Glenn Highway Corridor Interpretive Plan	\$113,684
Seward Highway - Corridor Management Plan Implementation	\$ 24,999
Sterling Highway Corridor Management Plan	\$151,200
Glenn Highway - Corridor Management Plan Implementation	\$ 24,999
Alaska's Marine Highway - Corridor Management Plan Implementation	\$ 24,999
Alaska's Marine Highway Interpretive Planning - Phase 1	\$ 34,128
Total for Alaska (6 projects)	\$374,009

National scenic byways discretionary funds enable states to undertake eligible projects along highways designated as All-American Roads, National Scenic Byways and state-designated byways. Eligible under the program are planning projects to inventory, preserve and enhance qualities of byways; safety improvements; construction of bike and pedestrian facilities; development of visitor information such as brochures and interpretive facilities and scenic overlooks; and resource protection such as scenic easements and byway marketing. These efforts serve as tools to boost local economies through tourism and create a sense of pride.

“The City of Homer is thrilled to receive this grant and come one step closer to designation as a National Scenic Byway,” stated Walt Wrede, Homer City Manager. “We look forward to sharing and promoting the incredible resources, beauty and history that make up the Sterling Highway in Alaska,” he added.

In addition, these projects are intended to help carry on a legacy of stewardship. Since 1992, the National Scenic Byways Program has provided \$202 million for 1,488 projects in 48 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. During the same time period, Alaska has received over \$4.5 million in federal grants for 27 projects throughout the state.

Additional information, brochures and maps can be obtained by calling 1-800-4-BYWAYS (1-800-429-9297) or by going to the national scenic byways website at www.byways.org.

A table listing the scenic byways grants, in some cases pending application approval by FHWA, for fiscal year 2003 is on the Internet at http://www.byways.org/grants/approved_2003.html.

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For more information, contact: Diane Regan, Alaska Scenic Byways Coordinator at (907) 465-6975